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# FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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LIVESTOCK AND MEAT  
FLM 6-68  
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## WORLD SHEEP NUMBERS

### UP SLIGHTLY

World sheep numbers in early 1968 were estimated at 1,007.8 million head, up less than 1 percent from a year earlier and only 3 percent from the 1961-65 average. Lagging world wool prices and increased use of synthetics have helped to slow down the buildup in world sheep numbers.

Percentage changes in sheep numbers by geographic regions ranged from a 2.1-percent increase in the USSR to a 5.5-percent decrease in North America. Numbers in Asia rose 1.4 percent, and Oceania showed an increase of less than 1 percent. Western European sheep numbers were down 1 percent from a year earlier, while those in Eastern Europe approximated the 1967 level.

Sheep: Number in specified countries,  
average 1961-65, annual 1966-68

Continent	Average 1961-65	1966	1967	1968	Percent change		
					1968 1961-65	1968 1966	1968 1967
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000			
	head	head	head	head	Percent	Percent	Percent
North America.....	37,500	33,600	32,700	30,900	-17.6	- 8.0	-5.5
South America.....	122,200	126,200	125,000	124,800	+ 2.1	- 1.1	-0.2
Europe:							
Western.....	80,100	77,900	76,500	75,700	- 5.5	- 2.8	-1.0
Eastern.....	42,800	44,000	45,300	45,400	+ 6.1	+ 3.2	+0.2
Total Europe.....	122,900	121,900	121,800	121,100	- 1.5	- 0.7	-0.6
USSR.....	133,900	129,800	135,500	138,300	+ 3.3	+ 6.5	+2.1
Africa.....	128,400	130,300	129,000	129,400	+ 0.8	- 0.7	+0.3
Asia.....	218,600	228,500	234,000	237,300	+ 8.6	+ 3.9	+1.4
Oceania.....	211,500	214,900	224,500	226,000	+ 6.9	+ 5.2	+0.7
.....	975,000	985,200	1,002,500	1,007,800	+ 3.4	+ 2.3	+0.5

1/ Preliminary.

Sheep: Number in specified countries,  
average 1961-65, annual 1966-68

Continent and country	Month of enumeration 1/	Average 1961-65	1966	1967 2/	1968 2/
		Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand
<b>North America:</b>					
Canada.....	Dec.	920	765	682	653
United States 3/.....	Jan. 1	29,023	24,734	23,898	22,122
Guatemala.....	April	729	818	800	800
Mexico.....	Spring	6,259	6,639	---	6,705
Total North America 4/..		37,500	33,600	32,700	30,900
<b>South America:</b>					
Argentina.....	June 30	48,127	48,500	48,000	---
Brazil.....	Dec. 31	19,997	22,312	22,102	22,000
Chile.....	Dec.	7,526	7,460	---	---
Colombia.....	Jan. 1	1,550	1,840	1,845	---
Ecuador.....	Aug.	1,827	2,000	2,040	2,090
Falkland Islands.....		625	---	---	---
Peru.....	July 1	14,454	15,500	15,600	---
Uruguay.....	June 30	21,860	21,800	21,400	---
Total South America 4/..		122,200	126,200	125,000	124,800
<b>Europe:</b>					
<b>Western:</b>					
<b>EEC:</b>					
Belgium.....	Dec.	61	67	68	69
France.....	Oct.	8,876	9,056	9,186	9,248
Germany, West.....	Dec.	953	797	812	804
Italy.....	Jan.	7,956	7,900	8,150	8,576
Netherlands.....	Dec.	272	316	370	---
Luxembourg.....	May	2	3	3	---
Total EEC.....		18,120	18,139	18,589	19,070
Austria.....	Dec.	158	142	138	130
Denmark.....	July	65	112	122	---
Finland.....	June	249	175	173	---
Greece.....	Dec.	9,458	9,384	9,117	8,200
Iceland.....	Dec.	787	847	847	---
Ireland.....	Jan.	3,316	3,464	3,059	3,400
Norway.....	Dec.	991	1,043	1,044	988
Portugal.....	Dec.	5,045	5,029	5,029	5,029
Spain.....	Oct.	20,574	17,073	16,671	16,610
Sweden.....	June	188	238	267	290
Switzerland.....	April	236	267	236	209
United Kingdom.....	Dec.	20,689	21,818	21,053	20,446
Total Western Europe 4/..		80,100	77,900	76,500	75,700

(Continued)

The five major sheep and wool producing and exporting countries--Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Uruguay, and the Republic of South Africa--estimated sheep numbers to be about equal to the 335.7 million head recorded in 1967. There was some increase in sheep populations in Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of South Africa, while numbers declined in Argentina and Uruguay.



Sheep: Number in specified countries,  
average 1961-65, annual 1966-68

(Continued)

Continent and country	Month of enumeration <sup>1/</sup>	Average 1961-65	1966	1967 <sup>2/</sup>	1968 <sup>2/</sup>
		Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand
Europe (continued):					
Eastern:					
Albania.....		1,595	---	---	---
Bulgaria.....	Jan.	10,070	10,312	9,998	---
Czechoslovakia.....	Jan. 1	574	614	670	---
Germany, East.....	Dec. 3	1,922	1,963	1,928	---
Hungary.....	Mar.	3,048	3,270	3,274	---
Poland.....	June 30	3,177	3,164	3,321	---
Romania.....	Jan.	12,217	13,125	14,109	14,369
Yugoslavia.....	Jan. 15	10,232	9,868	10,329	10,345
Total Eastern Europe <sup>4/</sup> ...		42,800	44,000	45,300	45,400
Total Europe <sup>4/</sup> .....		122,900	121,900	121,800	121,100
USSR.....	Jan. 1	133,900	129,800	135,500	138,300
Africa:					
Morocco.....		14,710	12,400	12,000	---
Tunisia.....	Dec. 31	3,054	---	---	---
United Arab Republic.....	Jan. 1	1,610	1,640	---	---
Rhodesia.....	Dec. 31	372	---	438	---
Tanzania.....	Dec. 31	2,908	2,800	---	---
Uganda <sup>5/</sup> .....		816	791	---	---
South Africa, Republic of.....	June 30	39,759	42,760	41,755	42,172
South West Africa.....		---	3,983	---	---
Total Africa <sup>4/</sup> .....		128,400	130,300	129,000	129,400
Asia:					
Cyprus.....		418	400	459	---
Iran <sup>6/</sup> .....	Mar. 1	21,445	20,000	21,500	22,000
Jordan <sup>5/</sup> .....		752	1,136	---	---
Syrian Arab Republic.....	Dec. 31	3,968	5,075	---	---
Turkey.....	Dec. 31	32,863	33,382	34,663	35,000
Japan.....	Feb. 1	410	146	113	100
Total Asia <sup>4/</sup> .....		218,600	228,500	234,000	237,300
Oceania:					
Australia.....	March	160,924	157,562	164,407	165,000
New Zealand.....	June	50,536	57,343	60,100	---
Total Oceania <sup>4/</sup> .....		211,500	214,900	224,500	226,000
Total World <sup>4/</sup> .....		975,000	985,200	1,002,500	1,007,800

<sup>1/</sup> Estimates for countries falling in October-December are shown in the following year for comparisons. <sup>2/</sup> Preliminary. <sup>3/</sup> 50 States. <sup>4/</sup> Includes an allowance for missing data for countries shown and for other producing countries not shown. <sup>5/</sup> On native farms. <sup>6/</sup> 14 provinces only.

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Oceania. Sheep numbers in Oceania were estimated to be up almost 1.5 million head. Australia--the world's largest sheep producing country--recorded 165 million head, a slight increase from 1967. Any increase or decrease in Australian sheep numbers during 1968 will depend on the extent and severity of the present drought. Early indications are that the drought, which started in the fall of 1967, has reduced numbers rather sharply in certain areas of the country. New Zealand sheep numbers were estimated above a year earlier, but any major buildup will have to await improved prices for coarse wool in the world market.

South America. The South American sheep population was estimated to be down from a year earlier. Argentine numbers were lower because of heavy slaughter of female stock throughout 1967. A heavy drought currently is creating concern to the livestock industry in Argentina. Unfavorable weather conditions had an adverse effect on sheep numbers in Uruguay and Brazil last year. In Uruguay sheep slaughter was heavy because of a government restriction on cattle slaughter for local beef consumption during the last quarter of 1967. These three countries account for nearly 75 percent of the sheep raised in South America.

North America. Numbers in North America continued their downward trend, showing a decline of 5.5 percent from a year earlier and 18 percent from the 1961-65 average. January 1, 1968, sheep numbers in the United States were estimated at 22.1 million head, a decline of 7 percent from the previous year. Due to a similar decrease in stock sheep, a further decline is expected. Sheep and lamb slaughter in 1968 would have to be down at least 15 percent for the inventory to stabilize. The Canadian sheep population likewise is continuing its downward trend. Total numbers were down 4 percent. The largest drop in numbers occurred in Western Canada, where the decline was estimated at 7 percent. The downward trend is expected to continue despite greater interest in sheep production in some eastern areas.

USSR. The USSR recorded an increase in its sheep population for the third consecutive year. January 1, 1968, numbers--at 138.3 million head--were 2 percent above a year earlier; however, they are still below the peak reached in 1963.

Europe. Sheep numbers in Europe have remained relatively stable. In Western Europe, they decreased by 1 percent, while Eastern Europe recorded a slight gain. The United Kingdom--the largest sheep producing country in Europe--indicated a 3-percent decline from 1967. Approximately 100,000 head equivalent to 0.5 percent of the total, were slaughtered because of the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak.

Other. Numbers in Africa changed very little between 1967 and 1968. A 1-percent increase was reported in South Africa. Total numbers in Asia continued their upward trend. The sheep population is on the increase in Turkey and Iran as a result of a very high demand for mutton.